

ST. AUSTELL,

January, 1899.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE ST. AUSTELL URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

GENTLEMEN,

I am instructed by the Local Government Board to present to you annually a Report on the Health of your District, the work accomplished, and also what work is in contemplation. It is now twenty years since I have been appointed Medical Officer of Health for your District, during which time I have, to the best of my ability, endeavoured to improve, not only the health of the inhabitants, but also the housing of the Working Classes. I can look back on places that were in an unsanitary state, and where disease was prevalent, and which at present are much improved; but sanitary science being progressive, there are still places that claim attention. Owing to the small area of the District it is almost impossible to carry out some of the reforms that are necessary, more especially the class of dwelling houses where there is no air space at the back.

During the year four cases of Erysipelas were reported to me, two of which proved fatal; one was transmutic, and the others were in aged people with weak and delicate constitutions.

The only other Zymotic disease that occurred was Scarlet Fever. The first case was reported on 25th October, but there were a few cases before that time which were not reported owing to the cases being mild and having no medical advice. From that period to the end of the year forty-six cases were reported. There were others that were not reported—the parents pleading ignorance of the law—and no doubt this was the cause of the disease spreading. The houses were visited and disinfectants were supplied, and the general condition of the places was reported to you, and, where necessary, notices were served. Only one case proved fatal, that being a child under five years of age. The Boys' School was closed for a short period.

Although no special sanitary work has been accomplished during the year, a good deal of useful and practical improvements have been made. At Moorland Road nine houses were found in an unsanitary state, and the necessary notices were served, and, at present, the houses are in a somewhat better condition, although not satisfactory. Seven houses at Eastbourne Road were reported being without proper privy accommodation, but I am informed that no action has as yet been taken. Four houses near Eastbourne Road were reported as unfit for occupation; but since they have passed into other hands, steps are being taken to renovate them, and one house in Eastbourne Road has been closed.

The Drinking Water has been satisfactory, there being no scarcity during the summer months. It has been analysed twice, the report being exceptionally good. The water being so pure, and piped from its source, I see no means of contamination; consequently the filtering beds are of no use, and I would recommend that the said beds be covered.

Drainage has been extended at Moorland Road, Palace Road, and Duke Street. At present, Eastbourne Road and Undertown are under consideration, and also Tregonissey Road. These will, I hope, be accomplished shortly.

You have had also under your notice several houses outside your district draining into the Urban sewers—Westbourne Terrace, Cosgarne, Sydenham, Tremena, and some houses in Tregonissey Road. These being close to your District, it is a forcible reason why the District should be extended.

The site for the Urinal has been sanctioned by the Freeholder and steps are now being taken for erecting same.

The old Byelaws have been done away with and new ones sanctioned. I hope they will be strictly adhered to, and so prevent houses being erected without sufficient air space, and the streets improved and widened if possible, and piggeries done away with. Several of the latter have been moved during the year, but there are some others that should follow.

At present, there is only one Slaughter House in the District; it is in a crowded neighbourhood, but has been kept clean.

There is only one registered Lodging House in the District; but I fear there are persons who take in lodgers who are not registered. They evade the law by saying they have a refreshment licence.

The Bakehouses have been visited and found clean.

Several privies have been converted into water closets, and, where practicable, cesspits have been done away with.

The Dairies and Cowsheds have been inspected and reported on and very few found satisfactory. On inspection of Mr. Jury's premises at the Moors, finding the drinking water was obtained from a deep well, and the surroundings not appearing satisfactory, a sample of the water was taken for analysis, but it proved to be pure and wholesome.

During the present year I will call the attention of the Council to the want of an Isolation Hospital. A few cases at the commencement of the outbreak of Scarlet Fever taken to such a place probably would be the better way of checking the spread of the disease, and also saving of cost to the ratepayers.

I will also call your attention to the drains from court ways, where there is property belonging to different owners connected with the main sewer.

I append the Birth and Death Rate.

Year.	Birth Rate.	Death Rate.
1880	33. 1	22.0
1881	26. 5	18.1
1882	27. 3	25.9
1883	26. 2	24.8
1884	30. 9	18.7
1885	27.07	27.3
1886	24. 2	23.4
1887	25. 1	25.9
1888	22. 8	18.4
1889	23. 4	15.6
1890	19. 2	23.7
1891	25. 3	22.1
1892	23. 8	20.1
1893	26. 7	23.8
1894	28. 6	20.1
1895	25.02	18.9
1896	23. 8	16.6
1897	22. 1	16.6
1898	20. 9	23.2

You will see the Birth Rate is low and the Death Rate high. It is a rare occurrence for the Death Rate to be higher than the Birth Rate, as has happened during last year. The Birth Rate is below the average and the Death Rate is above; the deaths in the Union Workhouse are nearly the same as previous years, the increase being in the town. There were twenty-two deaths in persons over sixty-five years of age, whilst for the previous year there were fourteen. In young children there were in 1898 fourteen, whilst for 1897 there were seven. The increased mortality was in aged people and very young children. Omitting the Union Workhouse the Death Rate would have been 16.9.

Of Zymotic diseases there were fifty notified with three deaths, whilst for 1897 there were twelve notified with one death. The rate for 1898 was '85 per 1000, whilst for 1897 it had been '28.

The number of deaths from diseases of the Respiratory System was, in 1898 twenty-eight, and in 1897 it was nineteen. Nearly half the deaths for last year were of persons over sixty-five years of age, whilst of children under one year there were eighteen deaths for 1898 and in 1897 eight.

I have endeavoured to point out to you that, although we have had a high death rate, it has not been due to preventable diseases, or in any way connected with the sanitation of your District. I will bring under your notice any sanitary reforms that I may deem necessary during the coming year. I beg to thank the other officials for the assistance given to me.

I have the honour to remain,

GENTLEMEN,

Yours obediently,

WILLIAM MASON, M. O. H.

